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ABSTRACT

This report examines the college records of students at the University of South Carolina who had previously been incarcerated. Records were available for 40 students with varying types of criminal backgrounds who had been admitted to the university during the period 1965-73. Only one of these students had graduated from the institution, and the data suggested that most inmate-students had difficulty completing the academic requirements. Because of these problems, the author suggests several remedies. Inmate-students might profit from special assistance and concerted efforts toward the successful attainment of collegiate goals (as has been successfully demonstrated with Opportunity Scholars, Upward Bound Students, etc.). Counseling and motivational techniques may be fruitful in increasing the opportunities for success. The author further recommends that the progress of inmate-students be monitored more closely at the university, and that there be continued research and evaluation to help future planning and rehabilitation efforts for these individuals. (Author)

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Division of Student Affairs

SUBJECT: The Inmate as Student - An Investigation of Formerly Incarcerated Students Attending the University of South Carolina

Research Notes No. 21 July, 1974

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DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Research Notes

No. 21 July, 1974

SUBJECT: The Inmate as Student - An Investigation of Formerly Incarcerated Students Attending the University of South Carolina

Background and Purpose: Between the Fall of 1965 and the Fall of 1973, the University of South Carolina has records of admission for approximately 40 students who attended classes on a full-time basis at the University's main campus after having been previously incarcerated at various correctional institutions. Many more inmates are taking courses, or have taken courses while still in prison. These latter courses are offered by the University and administered by the State Department of Corrections.

Part-time students are admitted to U.S.C. upon (1) completing sentence, (2) placed on parole, or (3) by participating in one of the following programs:

1. Work-Study - This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides tuition and fees while the inmates attend the University. The inmates work at a part-time job and are housed at the Watkins Pre-Release Center in West Columbia.
2. Educational Release - The inmate commutes to the University. He pays his own tuition and fees and lives at a pre-release center. A prerequisite for participation in this program is that the inmate should complete his education at the same time or after he completes his sentence.
3. Educational Furlough - In this program, the inmate can go to any educational institution in the state; he lives on campus or at home and pays his own educational expenses.

In order to be approved for one of these programs, the inmate:

1. Consults with his case worker to determine his eligibility,
2. Applies to the University and makes arrangements for VA benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation benefits, or family payments,

3. Submits a formal application to the warden,

4. Undergoes psychological evaluation.

To determine the basis for eligibility, the inmate must take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and must achieve a score satisfactory for the University admission requirements. He must have completed one quarter of his sentence if it is 5 years or less, or must be within one year of eligibility for parole of his sentence.

Nature and Scope of the Study:

Presently, the University has no organized information regarding the success of those inmates or former inmates attending or who have attended the University. The purpose of this investigation was to examine 25[1] students at the University who had previously been incarcerated. The sample consisted of 19 students who were enrolled in one of the programs above, 3 who had been paroled in South Carolina, and 3 who were paroled from institutions outside the State of South Carolina. Eighteen of the students spent an average of 2 years, 5 months in incarceration, while 3 students are currently serving their sentences. Information on length of time served was not available for 4 students. The mean age for this group was 24.6 years. Their median SAT scores were 492.5 on the Verbal section and 495 on the Math section, for a total of 997.5. Mean SAT scores were 493 Verbal and 513 Math, totaling 1006. (These scores are slightly higher than the average scores for entering freshmen at the University during the period of the study.) In view of these students' unique backgrounds, this report will focus on where they were incarcerated, and their academic accomplishments at the University. Table 1 lists the representative institutions of incarceration.

[1]The 25 students were chosen because they had complete and accurate academic and criminal records. The other 15 students were eliminated from the report because of incomplete records.

Table 1

Institution of Incarceration

Institution	f	%
Central Correctional Institution (S.C.)	14	56
Manning Correctional Institution (S.C.)	6	24
Lexington County Jail (S.C.)	1	4
MacDougall Youth Center (S.C.)	1	4
Georgia Dept. of Corrections	1	4
Virginia Penal System	1	4
National Training School for Boys (Washington, D. C.)	1	4
	n = 25	100%

Comments:

1. Eighty-eight percent of the students came to the University from South Carolina penal institutions, with the majority (56%) coming from the Central Correctional Institution in Columbia.
2. Twelve percent of the students are from penal institutions outside of the State of South Carolina and all were enrolled after being paroled.
3. Together, these students have attempted 1137 hours and completed 826 hours, for a completion percentage of 72.6%[2]. Their U.S.C. cumulative mean and median grade point ratios are 2.513 and 2.511, respectively[3].

[2] (N=24) Information concerning hours attempted/completed were incomplete on one student.

[3] (N=23) Grade point ratio information was unavailable for two students.

Table 2

College of Enrollment and Degrees Awarded

College	f	%	Degrees Awarded
Arts and Science	13	52	1
Business Administration	7	28	0
Journalism	3	12	0
Education	1	4	0
Engineering	1	4	0
General Studies	1[4]	4	1
	25	100%	2

At the time these data were last updated (February, 1974), 1 student had received a bachelor's degree, 7 were still attending the University, and 15 students had withdrawn, with 2 additional students on academic suspension.

Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the records of students at the University of South Carolina who had previously been incarcerated. Records were available for approximately 40 students, with varying types of criminal backgrounds, who had been admitted to the University of South Carolina during the period 1965-1973. In the past 9 years, only one such person has received a bachelor's degree. It is possible that the University will receive many more applications from inmates and former inmates in the future.

The data suggest that inmate-students have difficulty completing academic requirements. Because of this problem, these inmate-students might profit from special

[4]The student formerly enrolled in the College of General Studies has graduated and is now enrolled in the College of Business Administration.

assistance and a concerted effort placed on the successful attainment of collegiate goals (as has been successfully demonstrated with Opportunity Scholars, Upward Bound students, etc.). Counseling and motivational techniques may be fruitful in increasing the opportunities for success of the inmate-student.

It is further recommended that the progress of inmate-students be monitored more closely at the University. Continued research and evaluation of the inmate-student would serve a useful function in future planning and rehabilitation efforts for these individuals.